



# Emergency Management **UPDATE**

April 2000

## Embarking on the road to change

### Legislature moves to give new direction and definition to state emergency management

by Bill Edmonson  
Planning Supervisor

**T**he General Assembly recently approved three bills supported by the Virginia Department of Emergency Services (VDES) that will result in changes to the Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws effective July 1.

#### **HB 1352 Name Change**

The first will change the name of the agency from the "Department of Emergency Services" to the "Department of Emergency Management." This legislation will also clarify some of the confusing and out-of-date language in the current Law.

"I think our new name, 'Emergency Management,' will more clearly reflect our primary role of helping to manage emergency response and recovery operations in the event of a major disaster," said Michael Cline, State Coordinator of Emergency Services.

The change should also help to avoid confusing VDES with the Health Department's Office of Emergency Medical Services, explained Cline. When surveyed, local directors/coordinators of emergency services were 90 percent supportive of the name change and are expected to change the names of their local offices as well.

#### **HB 1338 Mutual Aid**

The second establishes the Statewide Mutual Aid program developed to assist cities and counties to more effectively and



Photo Illustration

efficiently exchange services and resources in response to a major emergency or disaster. It is primarily designed for responding to a regional disaster when one region of the state needs to provide assistance to another.

"We have been trying to get something like this on the books for a long time," said Selby Jacobs, Chair of the Statewide Mutual Aid Committee. "It will eliminate a lot of the confusion and uncertainty on the part of local officials when they consider sending or receiving this kind of help."

Most of the potential problems are addressed and resolved up-front. It should also be emphasized that this program is supplemental to, and in no way interferes with, existing mutual aid agreements between adjacent or nearby localities," explained Jacobs.

Several other states have established similar in-state mutual aid programs in the last several years and at least two, Florida and North Carolina, have used them effectively in response to recent disasters. In Virginia, the need for such a program

was especially apparent following Hurricanes Fran in 1996 and Floyd in 1999.

Soon after the Hurricane Fran disaster, a committee with representatives from emergency response member organizations statewide and selected state agencies was formed to address the issue.

#### **SB 245 Local Aid**

The third makes any town eligible for assistance under the Commonwealth Emergency Relief for Localities program, if it meets certain criteria, regardless of the eligibility status of the county in which it is located. This program provides procedures whereby the Governor can provide direct grants to localities that cannot by other means meet the costs of disaster-related response activities or damages to public property. It is used most often following a small, localized disaster when federal disaster assistance is not available.

For more information on any of these legislative issues, contact Bill Edmonson at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6527, or [wedmonson.des@state.va.us](mailto:wedmonson.des@state.va.us).

# 'Last resort' offers temporary oasis



**T**he arrangement may be temporary, but the relationships being forged in a Southampton County temporary housing park will last long after the last mobile home has rolled off the lot.

About 66 families whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged by Hurricane Floyd floodwaters currently reside on the site in both manufactured homes and travel trailers. Another 25 families are living in travel trailers on their property while making repairs. All had nowhere else to turn when they were suddenly displaced.

The resulting manufactured housing park is the product of an exhaustive joint federal/state search for available local resources. Southampton County Administrator Michael Johnson says they realized temporary housing was going to be an issue early on and began coordinating with VDES State Coordinator Michael Cline about this issue.

As the Commonwealth has no temporary housing programs of its own, Cline turned to Bill Shelton, Director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD), to begin the process even before the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) tasked the state to identify a site.

With 12 years' experience in real estate development, VDHCD Principal Deputy Director Glenn Oder was the logical choice. He first met with Johnson and Franklin City Manager Rowland Taylor to determine their site preferences and was impressed by their cooperation and focus on expediting the process.

"We had three criteria in mind when choosing the site," says Johnson. "It had to be fairly close to where the displaced residents lived so as not to be disruptive to

their commuting patterns. There had to be easy access to utilities such as public water and sewer, and we had to be able to quickly execute an agreement."

Oder says the best option turned out to be an 111-acre industrial park on Route 58 between Courtland and Franklin. As the Southampton County Board of Supervisors actually controls the property, Oder had to make a presentation before the board.

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***"For the first couple of months, you're numb. We contacted FEMA while we were at the (National Guard) armory and they couldn't have been better to us."***

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— Charles Stradley, Flood Victim

"I commented that I knew they might have reservations about giving up some of this property which was zoned for agricultural-industrial use," says Oder. "One of the board members spoke up and said, 'This isn't our park. It belongs to the people and they need it now.' I was truly impressed by that legislator's realization of the important role they could play in facilitating recovery from this disaster."

FEMA then tasked the Army Corps of Engineers to create a development plan and Oder negotiated a lease with Southampton County on behalf of the state. Johnson says Southampton County is setting aside the rental fees the state is paying as leverage for a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) proposal.

A manufactured housing project is truly the "option of last resort" to aid these impacted individuals, according to FEMA Human Services Officer Eileen Taylor-Fedeles. It is a costly proposition (both in

terms of labor and resources) that can only be offered for up to 18 months. During that time, Taylor-Fedeles says FEMA counselors work with residents to create individually tailored, permanent housing plans.

Charles Stradley of the Dockside area of Southampton County says he and his wife, Cathleen, lived within eight feet of the water and only had water in their house twice in more than 20 years living in Southampton County. With only enough flood insurance to cover an equity loan for home improvements, the Stradleys must choose whether to repair, relocate or sell the house at its assessed value.

"We're hoping to repair our home and go back if we can get financing," says Stradley. "As soon as something like this happens, the price of homes keeps going up and we can't afford to buy a new one."

While FEMA looks at the "big picture," VDES Local Planning Assistance Branch Chief Barbara Moore-Scruggs helps to sharpen the focus. As State Individual Assistance Officer, she is a liaison between applicants and the state/locality. She maintains regular contact with park managers to ensure daily issues are addressed.

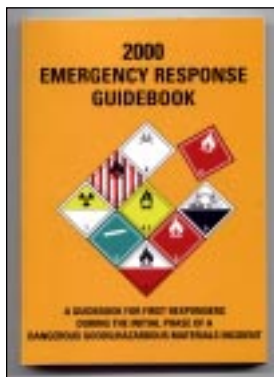
"We are addressing individual assistance needs that affect the health and welfare of those impacted by disaster," says Moore-Scruggs. "For instance, residents have the option of requesting bottled water due to an existing problem with high levels of fluoride in the county water."

Melvin Everett rented a home in Southampton County for three years when floodwaters washed it away, and he was only able to escape with what he could carry with him. Like the large population of displaced renters, he is not sure where he is going from here. Many will want to rent again. *(continued on page 4)*



# VDES issues new response guides with tutorial included

By Patrick M. Collins and Thomas Jordan, VDES Technological Hazards Division



Every three to four years, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) revises the Emergency Response Guidebook for police, fire and other emergency responders who may be the first to arrive at the scene of a hazardous materials incident.

Jointly developed by DOT, Transport Canada (TC) and the Secretariat of Transport and Communications of Mexico (STC), the 2000 edition is hot off the presses and VDES is now undertaking the monumental task of processing and delivering these books to response agencies statewide.

Though we expect an Emergency Response Guidebook to be issued for every emergency response vehicle in the

Commonwealth and that every first responder is trained on its proper use, we have also noted several changes in hazardous materials response from the 1996 edition.

As these changes were made to help make the guidebook more user-friendly to first responders, VDES has opted to continue the trend by issuing the books with a little training of our own.

This page-by-page comparison of the current and previous versions should prove to be a helpful tool to alert end users about what changes they can expect in the update. The comparison should also prove valuable in preparing managers for questions about the books. Though the books are still referenced in the same way, the important differences listed below are worth noting.

For more information or clarification on these changes or other information found in the guidebook, please call Pat Collins at (804) 987-6500, ext. 6568, or Tom Jordan (ext. 6625) in the VDES Technological Hazards Division or contact the Hazardous Materials Officer in your local jurisdiction.



## Safe schools training now offered for EMs

by Bill Edmonson, VDES 4 SAFE VA Alliance Representative

In May 1999, Governor Gilmore announced 4 SAFE VA, an ongoing initiative to promote school safety in the Commonwealth with a focus on increased training, awareness and resources.

Specialized training for law enforcement officers, educators and school support staff is one of the key features of the program. During the summer of 1999, the Virginia State Police provided school safety instruction to more than 2000 local law enforcement and school personnel who learned how to better prevent and more appropriately and quickly respond to various types of critical incidents in public schools.

The next phase of this training is designed for local emergency management coordinators. In many cities and counties, they are in a unique position to facilitate the necessary coordination between local schools, law enforcement, fire, EMS and other local organizations. Clearly, all such groups need to work together in order to develop and maintain a viable community-wide school safety program.

The Virginia State Police and the Department of Education will conduct three school safety training sessions statewide over the next several months.

Letters of invitation are being sent out separately, and each local emergency management coordinator or designee (as determined by the local director of emergency management) is encouraged to attend one of these sessions:

- May 31 - Nokesville  
(Prince William County)
- June 14 - Roanoke County
- July 11 - Yorktown

(continued on page 4)

### Guide to the Guide: Unique features of the 2000 edition

- ◆ Name change from *The North American Emergency Response Guidebook* to *The 2000 Emergency Response Guidebook*
- ◆ The terms *hazardous materials* and *dangerous goods* are synonymous
- ◆ Directs users to Guide 112 for all explosive incidents except for division 1.4 for which Guide 114 is to be used
- ◆ Section on rail car and road trailer identification to aid in materials identification
- ◆ Emergency telephone numbers in the back of the guide
- ◆ Detailed instructions on how to use the guide
- ◆ Updated table of placards
- ◆ List of hazard identification codes displayed on some intermodal containers
- ◆ Section on basic weapons of mass destruction with new information incorporated into the *Table of Initial Isolation and Protective Action Distances*
- ◆ Compatibility groups discussed in the glossary
- ◆ Decontamination information includes mass decontamination of people exposed to chemical and biological materials\*

(\*This information may present potential inconsistencies with other information sources due to the incorporation of bleach into the decontamination process of people. Most experts recommend that soap and water is the decontamination solution of choice on people.)

# Training Calendar

## Emergency Management

### EOC Mgmt. and Operations

April 4-6/Charlottesville

### Hazardous Weather and Flooding Preparedness

April 11-13/Abingdon

### Exercise Design

April 18-19/Richmond

### Principles of Emergency Mgmt.

May 2-4/Richmond

### Basic Public Information Officer Course — May 3-5/Williamsburg

### Disaster Response and Recovery Operations Course

May 9-11/Richmond

### Coordinator's Briefing

May 18/Abingdon

### Emergency Planning Workshop

June 6-8/Charlottesville

## Reservist Training

### Info. and Planning Branch PDA

#### Team Deployment Exercise

April 26/Richmond

### VEOC Message/Mission Flow

#### Exercise — May 3/Richmond

### Reservist Update Seminar

May 16/Roanoke

### Hazard Mitigation Refresher

#### Course — May 16/Roanoke

## Search and Rescue

### State SAR Simulation

April 7-9/Chesterfield and Roanoke

### CAP-Sponsored GSAR (II)

April 12-16/Fort A.P. Hill

### SAR Council

April 29/Richmond

### ASRC GSAR

May 5-7/Winchester

## Technological Hazards

### Hazmat Technician

April 3-14/Ashland

### Adv. Hazardous Materials

#### Control — May 15-19/Ashland

## Temporary Oasis

(continued from page 2)

"We are dealing with individuals with unique problems and issues," says Taylor-Fedele. "This is an unusual setting for these people — most have never lived in trailers. This situation has totally upset their lives and they are angry at the world."

"We have their best interests at heart and are making every effort to move them toward a permanent housing situation as quickly as possible. This is a starting point to put some semblance of order back in their lives."

"For the first couple of months, you're numb," says Stradley. "We contacted FEMA while we were at the (National Guard) armory and they couldn't have been better to us. We were fortunate to get a trailer where everything is so comfortable."

For Everett, his small mobile home at the rear of the park is a godsend. He had been going from place to place trying to find lodging when a park resident told him about this temporary housing option. Now, he's just thankful to have his own key and not have to knock on doors to find a place to stay.

Both Taylor-Fedele and Moore-Scruggs say the experience has highlighted the need for more coordination between local, state and federal agencies. Moore-Scruggs, who serves as the VDES State Disaster Recovery Task Force liaison, explains that local task forces are conduits through which unmet needs are addressed.

"Every state agency is a 'potential' member of the task force," says Moore-Scruggs. "The unmet needs created by the impact of each disaster determine which agencies are activated. We need to convene the players on an ongoing basis to help prevent misinformation, confusion and delays."

With less than a year left for this temporary oasis, FEMA caseworkers and their state and local counterparts continue to minister to individuals, nurturing growth of the human spirit. For more information on this project, contact Barbara Moore-Scruggs at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6524.



**Shelter from the storm.** Charles Stradley shows Barbara Moore-Scruggs photos of cherished possessions destroyed by flood.

## School Safety (continued from page 3)

In addition to training programs, 4 SAFE VA has also allocated \$1.5 million for additional School Resource Officers (SROs) in public middle and high schools and instituted a toll-free statewide hotline for students or anyone wanting to report violence or drug-related incidents or concerns. For more information about the 4 SAFE VA program, visit their Web site at [www.4safeva.org](http://www.4safeva.org) or contact Bill Edmonson at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6527, or [wedmonson.des@state.va.us](mailto:wedmonson.des@state.va.us).



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Richmond, VA

UPDATE is a monthly publication of the Virginia Department of Emergency Services. For permission to reprint articles in your publication or on the Internet, please call 804/897-6510.

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